While African universities retain their core function as primary institutions for advancement of knowledge, they have undergone fundamental changes in this regard. These changes have been triggered by a multiplicity of factors, including the need to address past economic and social imbalances, higher education expansion alongside demographic and economic growth concerns, and student throughput and success with the realization that greater participation has not meant greater equity. Constraining these changes is largely the failure to recognize the encroachment of the profit motive into the academy, or a shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to a neo-liberal knowledge/learning regime. Neo-liberalism, with its emphasis on the economic and market function of the university, rather than the social function, is increasingly destabilizing higher education particularly in the domain of knowledge, making it increasingly unresponsive to local social and cultural needs. Corporate organizational practices, commodification and commercialization of knowledge, dictated by market ethics, dominate university practices in Africa with negative impact on professional values, norms and beliefs. Under such circumstances, African humanist progressive virtues (e.g. social solidarity, compassion, positive human relations and citizenship), democratic principles (equity and social justice) and the commitment to decolonization ideals guided by altruism and common good, are under serious threat. The book goes a long way in unraveling how African universities can respond to these challenges at the levels of institutional management, academic scholarship, the structure of knowledge production and distribution, institutional culture, policy and curriculum.
Knowledge and Change in African Universities
AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Volume 2

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This book series focuses on the historical foundations and current transformations of African higher education. It is aimed at scholars, students, academic leaders, policy makers and key stakeholders both in Africa and around the world, who have a strong interest in the progress, challenges and opportunities facing African higher education.

A diversity of higher education themes and issues related to African higher education at institutional, national, regional and international levels are addressed. These include, but are not limited to, new developments and perspectives related to knowledge production and dissemination; the teaching/learning process; all forms of academic mobility – student, scholar, staff, program, provider and policy; funding mechanisms; pan-Africa regionalization; alternate models of higher education provision; university leadership, governance and management; gender issues; use of new technologies; equitable access; student success; Africanization of the curriculum- to name only a few critical issues.

A diversity of approaches to scholarship is welcomed including theoretical, conceptual, applied, policy orientations. The notions of internationalization and harmonization of African higher education complements the cosmopolitan outlook of the series project through its comparative approach as critical imperatives. Finally, the book series is intended to attract both authors and readers, internal and external to Africa, all of whom are focused on African higher education including those doing comparative work on Africa with other regions of the world and the global South in particular.
Knowledge and Change in African Universities

Volume 2 – Re-Imagining the Terrain

Edited by

Michael Cross and Amasa Ndofirepi

University of Johannesburg, South Africa

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1. TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS IN THE NEW AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

The notion of the ‘new’ African university resonates with imperatives for transformation in post-colonial states across the African continent (Mamdani, 1996). The term ‘new’ signifies a momentum gathering within post-colonial universities to embark on transformational journeys which seek to interrogate inherited and embedded epistemes while developing new ways of conceptualising and developing new knowledge and knowledge production systems. At the centre of this debate is the need to transform the knowledge systems and processes which define the primary purposes of our universities. Most countries on the African continent, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, have a colonial past which created colonial knowledge systems designed to serve the needs of the colonisers more than they addressed the needs of the local communities and their indigenous economies and cultural identities. As the first wave of decolonisation took effect in the late twentieth century through to the early part of the 21st century, what has largely changed in Africa are the political and legal frameworks for new governance. Meanwhile, knowledge systems have continued to maintain the global neoliberal agenda, with the result that the power and economic relations which have marginalised the African continent, persist.

Marini (1965) argues that because of this dynamic, Africa has been transformed into a sub-imperialist continent, serving to extend and accompany the imperialist agenda of the former colonisers. If this is true, then it can be equally argued that the knowledge systems in African universities have not been adequately decolonised, as they continue to serve the needs of the colonisers more than those of local populations. In his book, Decolonizing the mind, Ngugi (1986) reminds us that the process of decolonisation is largely incomplete until the knowledge systems which shape people’s identities, linguistic capabilities and intellectual capital, including their socio-economic progress, have been decolonised.

In this chapter, I ask three critical questions about knowledge transformation in the African university. The first is: What are the imperatives behind knowledge production transformation in post-colonial universities in Africa? Secondly: In what ways have key knowledge production systems in research, curriculum design, teaching and learning, and in the training of doctoral students, remained unchanged? The third question is: How might these knowledge production systems
be transformed to better serve the needs of universities in the era of decolonisation? I begin with a brief, but critical discussion of the key concepts of transformation; the new African university; decolonisation; and knowledge production.

TRANSFORMATION

Although the term ‘transformation’ is often used interchangeably with ‘change’ and even ‘reform’, I see and use these terms in fundamentally different ways. Change does not necessarily result in transformation. Indeed, much of the change we see in education is cosmetic, often targeted at replacing people (e.g. replacing whites with blacks) in senior leadership positions; however, because of their previous training and experience or inexperience, they often replicate the old ways, which in turn, promotes institutional stagnation rather than transformation. I therefore argue that change in itself is a necessary but not sufficient guarantee for transformation. In a similar way, I see ‘reform’ in the context of its origins in church history. The churches that broke away from Roman Catholicism continue to worship the same God and place Christ at the centre of their faith, even if their rituals and practices may be different. In education, much reform has taken place especially in the curriculum, for example, new courses with new titles; new names and forms of assessment, amongst other things. However, the central purposes of these new curricula and forms of assessment have remained the same, i.e. to select students and confer degrees.

Therefore reforming an education system, as with changing it, does not necessarily result in fundamental transformation. In this chapter, I use the term ‘transformation’ to imply a complete and radical change, in which the original idea or process becomes unrecognisable, and the new creation serves new purposes. I argue that our universities in post-colonial Africa have thus far tinkered with change and reform at the edges, and have not quite been able to transform their knowledge production systems; thus they continue to perpetuate the hegemonies and dominance of western, colonial forms of education. I argue further that our universities have been remarkably complicit in continuing to accept the sub-imperialist and extractive interests of the erstwhile colonisers.

THE NEW AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

Most of our universities in Africa were developed according to templates of institutions in the colonising countries. For example, the University of Zimbabwe was developed as a college of the University of London, offering first and foremost degree curricula developed in London, for London students. Graduates were thus expected to meet the requirements of the colonising country in order to facilitate the extraction of talent and resources to serve the needs of the rapidly industrialising nations of the North (Moyo, 2011). It can be argued that even the universities established after the attainment of political independence in Africa, have continued to chart their developmental trajectories on similar western models. It is thus important
to note that so far, universities in Africa have been judged on criteria befitting the quality of their western counterparts. I am therefore suggesting that we do not as yet have any ‘good African universities’. In line with other African scholars such as Zeleza (2002), Nyerere (1967), Desai (2004) and Freire (1970), I shall posit that the new African universities we envisage would have to meet the following criteria:

• Be developed, not as elite institutions serving the needs of a privileged few, but as mass-based institutions to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to service the new needs of transforming societies

• Serve new purposes reflecting the realities of their economies and labour markets which require graduates with job creation, entrepreneurial and work orientation skills, rather than focusing on preparation for employment and employability. In many African countries, unemployment has become a norm for many graduates, and the continued focus on employability is somewhat misplaced for an increasing majority of them

• Develop and teach curricula in indigenous languages, so as to facilitate conceptual understanding in the local context

• Develop local epistemologies which prioritise an intimate understanding of the local environment and its challenges first and foremost, before turning to global imperatives

• Develop appropriate methodological approaches which prioritise collaborative rather than individualised learning and assessment, including methodologies suited to large class teaching

• Incorporate and develop indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies as authentic, priority knowledge generation systems

• Develop appropriate and socially just pedagogies, which seek to liberate rather than displace learners from their cultural and social realities

• Seek to espouse, expand and showcase African value systems, both symbolically and especially in leadership, management and policy dimensions of the university

• Prioritise the establishment of Afro-based knowledge generating partnerships and promote Afro-based communities of scholarship.

The above is not merely a shopping list for delivering the new African university. The purpose is to provide a framework which can be used to explore and critique current efforts towards indigenising, Africanising and decolonising the post-colonial university in Africa. I turn now to a discussion of these ideas.

INDIGENISATION, DECOLONISATION AND AFRICANISATION

Scholars who write on these themes tend to use the concepts interchangeably, and justifiably so. While there is much common terrain between them, I try in this section to tease out some distinctions.

Firstly, all three concepts represent a discourse of struggle against several injustices occasioned by western educational and imperial tendencies. The concepts thus
share a common enemy, which we now analyse. Four specific injustices of colonial education are usually cited in the literature (Biko, 1987). The first is the injustice of alienation. Colonial education presents a totally new way of understanding the world, which is alien to the indigenous people. Their own language, culture, beliefs, norms and values are cast aside as uncivilised, barbaric and inhuman, and replaced with new forms which they struggle to internalise and understand. As learners, students from the indigenous populations are faced with several learning hurdles, for example that of unlearning what they already know, thus increasing their vulnerability and competence to learn new things; the possibilities of cultural dissonance which creates obstacles in the learning process and constrains understanding; and the struggle with sense making in an unfamiliar learning environment.

The second injustice is the non-liberating nature of the education. Both in form, purpose and method, colonial education was designed to cultivate in the minds of the indigenous people, a sense of servitude towards a superior master through the creation of receptive and unquestioning learners. The learners were taught through what Freire (1970) terms a ‘banking philosophy’, structured around activities such as memorisation, tedious repetition, reciting sets of facts, and stories about ‘Benny and Betty’ (as depicted in the reading books used in the early years of schooling in the former British colonies). Any stories about ‘Chineke’ and ‘Sarudzai’ (local Nigerian and Zimbabwean names respectively), which could have represented the realities of the African child, were systematically deleted from their experience. According to Freire (1970), far from being liberating, colonial education systems were thus enslaving.

The third injustice of colonial education was the disempowerment dimension. It did not foster critical thinking skills which would allow learners to appraise, evaluate and imagine new ways of understanding and doing things. It simply created accomplices of the imperialist project, who were disengaged from the local struggles of development. They were minimally engaged with the more menial and routine tasks of servanthood, hence freeing the colonisers to focus more intently on their grand schemes of occupation, exploitation and extraction.

The fourth injustice directed at indigenous populations through colonial education was that of creating dependent rather than independent learners. Such learners are those who are not creative and cannot think ‘outside the box’. Three main occupations dominated the minds of learners in post-colonial times—teaching, nursing and police work. I remember after I completed my A levels in Zimbabwe, I was persuaded against making a career in the hotel industry, because as my parents insisted, and evidenced by the low occupational status occupied by the majority of indigenous people in the hotel industry, the only respectable job open to me was in the field of teaching. Our aspirations were thus channelled in limited directions, and working in the jobs mentioned became the only horizon of opportunity for local people. Learners were thus educated for dependent thinking through being denied the tools and skills for independent thinking and imagination; they were constrained by what was available, appropriate and possible for the black person. To work for
the ‘white man’ was valued more than thinking about creating work for oneself. The lives of black people thus became tied to, and dependent on what was considered relevant for them by others.

Although the concepts of indigenisation, decolonisation and Africanisation are used interchangeably to confront these common injustices, I use Makgoba’s (1997) idea of ‘Africanisation’ as being centrally concerned with culture and identity—a process which he says seeks to affirm a people’s culture and identity in the world community. Ramose (1998) agrees with this position, noting that Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more than the right to be African.

Following the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century (Packenham, 1991) European countries, chiefly Britain and France but including Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Belgium, occupied most of the continent, expropriating minerals and other natural resources using cheap slave labour, causing economic devastation, destroying the continent’s cultural capital, and imposing political subjugation on indigenous people. All this was justified on the theory of the ‘white man’s burden’ which represented ‘his’ moral obligation to civilise the so-called ‘dark continent’. During this period of plunder and expropriation, colonial powers carefully cultivated local intelligentsias educated in western universities to help them maintain the status quo through championing reforms that did not significantly disrupt the imperialist project. However, with time, protest wars for self-determination in different countries on the continent saw Africa systematically gaining political independence, starting with Libya in 1951 and finishing with South Africa in 1994. This marked the first wave of the decolonisation of the African continent. However, irreparable damage had been exerted on the entire continent, especially on economic and cultural fronts.

As indicated earlier, universities (as microcosms of societies) were designed to further the interests of the colonial powers, hence the need to decolonise them and turn them into new African universities, as described earlier. The decolonisation of universities implies transforming our institutions in multiple ways, to champion new purposes directed at serving Africa’s needs. We need to teach new content; to apply more appropriate pedagogical and assessment approaches; and to grow different critical epistemologies through which an indigenous professoriate can be developed to provide the required academic leadership for the desired transformation.

Finally, although the term can be applied more broadly to a variety of institutional dimensions, such as curriculum and knowledge, I see ‘indigenisation’ as being more concerned with the people element which involves and implies changing the personnel, particularly replacing whites with blacks in senior management positions and most functional areas. However, the mere change of personnel does not constitute complete indigenisation. Unless the new black staff members undergo a complete knowledge reorientation, and unless they start to use appropriate thinking tools, they very frequently end up being distorted images of their predecessors who knowingly (though more frequently unknowingly) reproduce the status quo rather than transform it. This brings us to the central question of knowledge production.
As indicated earlier, the knowledge production function is perhaps the most important mandate of any university. This does not neglect other significant university roles in society, which include: human capacity development; the ideological role, such as the cultivation of critical thinking skills to cement and develop new national identities; and the development of technical, technological, digital and information skills required for industrialisation and new labour markets. Universities need to become hubs for new community engagement in the quest for transformation and development.

In this section, I examine the meaning of this idea of knowledge production, from a range of perspectives, including the rationale for knowledge production; the process of knowledge production; the management of knowledge production in universities; the challenges African universities face in their role as knowledge producers; and finally the people who ordinarily assume the role of knowledge producers in universities. This is summarised into a framework of knowledge production as a contribution to the critique, analysis and reinvention activities that are required in reimagining knowledge production in the African university.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: MEANING AND RATIONALES

Knowledge production is the raison d’être of our universities—the major reason for their very existence. It is a multifaceted concept, with several important dimensions including its rationales and related processes; its management at national and institutional levels of the academy; amongst others. The construct of knowledge production includes the generation, utilisation and dissemination of knowledge. Essentially, knowledge production invites us to ask several important questions:

• What knowledge is of most worth in our current circumstances?
• What methodologies, approaches and management should we prioritise for its efficient production?
• What resources need to be marshalled to ensure a successful production process?
• What difficulties and contradictions might we anticipate in the transformation of knowledge production systems?

While wealth remains a powerful tool for development, it has now been overtaken by knowledge, especially in the context of what Castells (2010) refers to as the ‘knowledge economy’. Knowledge-based economies, which have superseded industrial wealth creation and wealth-based economies, depend largely on knowledge production and technological innovation as the most important productive forces. In order to be able to participate in global knowledge-based economies which are characterised by both competition and competitiveness, countries need to set up, resource and fund generously what Cloete (2012) calls ‘national research systems’—these comprise universities, private and public centres of research excellence,
and national laboratories, among other facilities. In a world that is fast changing, structures and systems which serve our needs today quickly become redundant under new circumstances. The necessary knowledge and skills to adapt thus become more important than the knowledge of yesteryear, despite its contribution to the corpus of indigenous knowledge.

Universities are expected to play a key role in this adaptation process, and to link new knowledge with technological innovation in ways that address new and ever-changing circumstances. For example, many diligent students will today come to classes with a diverse understanding of the topics we plan to teach. They can access such knowledge via the Internet and could perhaps even come with better content understanding than the teacher. Content dependent pedagogies thus require reforming in the current context of knowledge explosion and increasing access. Hence knowledge production can be visualised in terms of the imperatives of a fast-changing world, rapid technological advances, and the realities of climate change, global terrorism, among others. To this, I add the need to reinvent and rediscover lost national identities, which became the subject of systematic displacement throughout the years of colonialism. I argue that the narrative of change thus far tends to ignore this dimension. Unless we bring this narrative of redress to the fore, in the same way that we speak of technology change and the Internet as forces of transformation and how these influence what we teach, research and how we do so, we will not create the required momentum for championing the process of decolonising our knowledge production systems. But this begs the question first of what is worthwhile knowledge in the context of the African context of university.

WORTHWHILE KNOWLEDGE IN THE AFRICANISING UNIVERSITY

In a seminal essay, Herbert Spencer (1909) questioned the relevance of what was taught in the school curriculum in England, despite the industrial revolution which required people with new knowledge, skills and attitudes compared to those designed for the pre-industrial world. The question of what knowledge is of most worth thus became a key curriculum question. Dennis Lawton (1975), most well-known for his definition of curriculum as a ‘selection from culture’ would later address this question by suggesting that those who decide about the curriculum need to use a selective process to identify the knowledge that is of most worth. Yet the question remains as to whose or which culture forms the reservoir from which to make the selection of worthwhile knowledge. Above all, what criteria should the selection be based on, and whose interests would the selection serve most accurately? These questions remain important today, especially so in African universities which are trying to rediscover worthwhile knowledge for the task of transformation from colonialism and coloniality, to post-colonial and decolonised institutions.

Most universities around the world tend to organise their knowledge fields in four areas: the natural sciences; social sciences; mathematics and humanities. These fields ask different types of questions and utilise different and often competing theoretical
frameworks and methodological approaches in pursuing their fundamental questions. Within these fields, knowledge tends to be valued and validated across four key dimensions: the logical or analytical dimension, which values knowledge that is systematically connected and can be classified or grouped into logically derived units; the empirical dimension, which places emphasis on valid and reliable ways of pursuing truth; the moral dimension, which deals with questions of right and wrong; and the aesthetic dimension which deals with questions of beauty, desirable and undesirable human pursuits (Bellack, 1965). What seems to be universal across all these fields or disciplines of study and the ways in which they validate knowledge, is that their theoretical frameworks tend to have their origin in western cultures and values. Even if their relevance in transforming higher education systems in Africa should not necessarily be dismissed, it needs to be questioned. In doing so, alternative frameworks need to be developed and adopted, as competing if not dominant frameworks for addressing new questions that arise in the knowledge decolonisation process. I therefore argue that worthwhile knowledge in an African context is one which will help speed up the knowledge decolonising process. While such knowledge does not negate the importance of colonial knowledge systems, it questions and critiques their relevance, both routinely and persistently seeking only to preserve what remains relevant to our new circumstances, while actively pursuing their replacement with alternative and more relevant perspectives. Education or in this case, ‘knowledge for critical consciousness’ (Freire, 2005:6), thus becomes a key component of worthwhile knowledge in the Africanising university.

A second important element of worthwhile knowledge in the Africanising university, I argue, is that which captures African cultural heritages especially in the pre-colonial era. The approach to this endeavour would be to examine several dimensions of the cultural capital of African people on the continent: their religion and morality; their economic activities; their sense of self preservation and approaches to heath; their beliefs and values; their education, literacy and numeracy systems; and other aspects of their cultures. A parallel study programme focusing largely on the decimation of African cultures and identities through the colonial project of western countries would be an important element of the worthwhile knowledge required in the Africanising university.

In my view, I would suggest that all students in our universities need to have some exposure to the study of African culture and identity. Just as foreign students are now flocking to universities in the Arab and Asian worlds to learn about aspects of those cultures (Arab News, 2016), I argue that the flow of international students to Africa would increase substantially in order to access African knowledge (Lim, 2011). But more importantly, as others would argue, Africa needs to rediscover itself and assert its identity on the world stage (see for example Mamdani, 1997). Assertive universities will contribute in quite significant ways to the broad decolonisation process, and more specifically to the decolonisation of knowledge.

A third dimension of worthwhile knowledge in the process of decolonising our universities would be the technologisation of African educational practices. This is
necessary to facilitate their development and integration with socially just pedagogies which will be at the centre of education for the critical consciousness project. It is also important for correcting what Adebisi (2014) calls the ‘technological apartheid’ created by the imperialist project, which sought to maintain a sustained dependency of Africa on the more advanced nations in the west.

I see the technologisation of African education as important for a number of reasons. First, technology has not only expanded the horizons of possibilities across all areas of human endeavour, it has become a major means by which educational processes are implemented and enacted in our schools and universities. While we hesitate to invest in the creation of large educational projects of the magnitude of MOOCs for African traditional education, there will always be a risk that this aspect will be sidelined on the fringes of obscurity. Secondly, young people today are drawn towards learning that is technology driven, particularly using mobile devices that are becoming ubiquitous. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, technology facilitates not only the accumulation of valuable knowledge for utilisation in university studies, it also speeds up the processes of knowledge implementation in ways that will facilitate its prominence as a core curriculum area.

A key argument many lay against the idea of introducing African traditional culture and education into mainstream university courses is that the available material is far too dispersed and inaccessible for any meaningful utilisation thereof (Tiberondwa, 1978). It has also been argued that African traditional education was largely based on gendered roles, was too informal, was limited to specific requirements of isolated communities and societies (thus hampering its transferability and application in different contexts), and was based on methods that depended on the inculcation of fear, punishment and memorisation. Consequently, as argued by Adeyemi and Adenyika (2002), the system produced unquestioning, uncritical learners who are unsuited to the educational requirements of 21st century learners. Despite its shortcomings, African traditional education had numerous strengths which would serve today’s ailing and dismembered societies well. Its success in building and contributing to the economic, social and cultural stability and cohesion of societal structures is well documented (Adeyemi & Adenyika, 2002). It taught learners a work rather than an employment ethic, and as such, learners were seldom unemployed (Kaunda, 1966). African traditional education is also widely credited with inculcating the values of communalism rather than individualism and competition. As Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002) suggest:

Through traditional education, young people acquired a communal rather than an individualistic outlook. Education was instrumental in helping people to subordinate their personal interests to those of the wider community and to appreciate the values, norms and beliefs of their society. Thus, indigenous education prepared children to play their roles in the family, clan and the tribe as a whole. (p. 236)

I therefore submit that while African traditional education had its faults and weaknesses, just as with any other system, its complete obliteration from the
contemporary knowledge production mechanisms in our schools and universities is not only unjustified, it also further entrenches the hegemony of knowledge imperialism (Adebisi, 2014).

**KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS**

By ‘knowledge production systems’ I mean the methodologies, processes and approaches used to produce knowledge in the academy. In this section I explore critically three major knowledge production approaches in our universities: staff research; teaching and pedagogy; and research training for doctoral students. I also indicate ways in which they remain divorced from the ideals of the new African university.

**Decolonising Staff Research as a Knowledge Production System in the New African University**

Research is arguably the most important knowledge production mechanism in the university. Seen as a systematic and persistent quest for truth, research appears to most people as a neutral and unbiased way of knowledge generation (Hammersley, 2007). There are two main arguments against this. The first is that western knowledge forms have largely grown out of positivist and empiricist assumptions that privilege certain types of knowledge, and in particular, create hierarchies of knowledge which position quantitative methods, hypotheses testing, randomised trials and experiments as the most valid and reliable means of knowledge generation (Hammersley, 2007). I argue that this type of research, despite its significant contribution to knowledge universally, has promoted what I think is a world comfortable with ‘half understanding’ what happens around it.

For example, we know how the HIV virus causes havoc with the human immune system, but we shun any research which attempts to discover how people with HIV actually feel and experience the reality of suffering from immune deficiency. Such research is routinely described by many (see for example Arowolo, 2010) as mere hearsay or gossip, lacking in rigour and therefore unfit to influence policy and decisions about real problems which affect mankind. We look down upon the quality of evidence which is based on any other ways of knowing besides those driven by positivist and empiricist assumptions. It is therefore no coincidence that the fields of medicine and pharmaceuticals have managed only to produce medicines which manage diseases but not treat them. There is no cure for HIV; for high blood pressure; for diabetes; for cancer; and not even for flu. The list is endless. Producing cures for these ailments would compromise the profits of the companies that manufacture the medicines; and that is not good business. Allied to this state of affairs is neglect of African traditional medicines and practices which are routinely described as ‘dark practices’ of self-serving ‘sangomas’, and frequently associated with witchcraft and so seen as deserving little investment in research.
TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

(Arowolo, 2010). But as we know only too well, diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV and a whole range of other human ailments, are modern-day diseases whose emergence curiously coincides with westernisation and the destruction of African traditional culture and practices. On the one hand, we therefore need research which promotes a better understanding of indigenous knowledge systems. On the other, we need to question the wisdom of prioritising research which leads to the discovery of half-truths, and which promotes the perpetuation of disease rather than its absolute treatment. In short, we need to promote research which complements the discoveries from positivist methods, so as to save humankind, rather than that which promotes and supports the accumulation of capital by those who wield power in this world.

Such arguments have been used elsewhere (Ubani, 2011) to promote significant investment in research on indigenous knowledge systems in New Zealand, Canada, and China. To date, we know how Chinese medicines have become household brands in many parts of the world, including in Africa. Similar attempts have been tried in Uganda. For example, Dr Sekagya Hills, a trained dentist and African traditional healer has straddled the worlds of modern medical practice and traditional medical practice in Uganda for many decades. To date, he has worked with thousands of traditional healers, training them in methods which help make their practices safer and more hygienic. Over a three-year period, Sekagya Hills (cited in Ubani, 2011) has worked with 62 HIV patients using a combination of African herbal treatments. He has demonstrated an 85% success rate, and filed for patents of these herbs and treatment regimes. Clearly, more research is required to promote discoveries in the field of traditional medical practices. In many cases, traditional medicines are cheaper (and therefore affordable), and would contribute towards reducing the spread of this devastating disease amongst the poor people of this continent. Traditional healers are also generally more accessible than western trained medical practitioners (Ubani, 2011). Further local research is required to promote the preservation of herbs and reduce deforestation and illegal farming practices; such a focus would go a long way towards securing a place for African traditional practices in the mainstream processes of contemporary human endeavour.

Following Mamdani (2011) who argues that the current intellectual and research paradigm in universities should be challenged, I posit the following as significant strategies for the decolonisation of research in African universities:

- Redefining the purposes and nature of research that would contribute more meaningfully towards the decolonisation process. This should not be expected to happen effortlessly; it needs to be a key strategic and appropriately funded aspect of the transformation of universities in the age of decolonisation. Government involvement will be crucial, especially in terms of making funding available.
- Strategically positioning African traditional ideology and philosophy as competing gazes and overarching backdrops for the re-conceptualisation of research in universities.
• Positioning indigenous knowledge systems as a central theme in research training, and as a key curriculum growth area for research and teaching in the university
• Leadership training for the research decolonisation process
• Creating key strategic research and development partnerships with similar institutions and organisations on the African continent. This does not imply a negation of engagement with non-African partners, but signals the significance of prioritising Africa in defining, conceptualising and planning locally relevant research.
• Promoting collaborative, cross disciplinary and cross institutional research in order to increase the potential of elevating local research to global status.

Decolonising Teaching and Pedagogy as a Knowledge Production System in the New African University

For the purposes of this chapter, a broad view of teaching and pedagogy is used, representing three interlocking elements, namely the content of teaching, the resources and the instructional approaches used in the academy. As part of a knowledge production system, and despite the imperatives for transformation, these three elements of many university courses have not changed significantly since independence (see for example Geddis, 2006). Some changes have occurred in subject disciplines such as history and language courses, with the introduction of African histories and the teaching of more indigenous languages. However, other than changes in content and facts, the approaches to teaching history have remained rather static. In terms of the teaching of indigenous languages, numerous reports suggest that even these have generally been taught through the medium of English or French. For example, Shona courses in schools and at the University of Zimbabwe are taught through the medium of English due to the lack of resources, expertise and materials such as dictionaries etc. (see for example Thondhlana, 2002; Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013). Yet, the teaching of indigenous languages is not just a human rights and social justice issue—it provides a range of academic benefits to learners, including meta linguistic awareness; increased mental flexibility; improvement in national achievement scores; and improvement of learner well-being (see for example Demmert, 2001).

In terms of pedagogy, the most prevalent methodological approach for teaching in universities has remained the large group lecture. This has become even more pertinent in the context of the ever-increasing massification of higher education, itself a result of globalisation and widening of access—an important pillar of post-colonial education transformation. While there are multiple reasons causing this stagnation of teaching methods, I argue that forms of assessment in universities have been the major obstacle. Based on the values of competition, individualism and elitism, assessment strategies in our universities continue to reflect normative intentions designed to measure learning, rather than to promote it; designed to endorse and cement privilege rather than to broaden participation and engagement,
especially of previously disadvantaged young people; designed to endorse and support individual ambition and problem solving, rather than to democratise and promote collective problem solving. Methods and pedagogies are unlikely to change as long as we continue using unreformed assessment regimes in our courses.

Therefore despite the rhetoric of change and reform, teaching and pedagogy in many African universities have remained largely untransformed. I posit the following as potential strategies for decolonising teaching and pedagogies in the African university:

- Reviewing the content of many existing university programmes in order to create space for the integration of locally relevant content
- Developing pedagogies which speak to the realities of large class teaching, collaborative learning and cross disciplinary knowledge imperatives
- Transforming current elitist and individualistic assessment methods
- Developing the requirements for teaching indigenous languages and using them as the medium of instruction across different phases of schooling
- Developing opportunities for collaborative teaching and learning across universities on the continent.

Decolonising Doctoral Research Training as a Knowledge Production System in the New African University

Doctoral training in our universities remains the single most important strategy for knowledge production. The essence of a PhD degree is to produce graduates who operate at the boundaries of knowledge in various fields of human endeavour, and who always seek to extend those knowledge boundaries. Developed countries of the world almost always have large numbers of doctoral graduates conducting research in universities and other institutes and organisations. Therefore both as a broad policy issue, and as a key strategic matter, doctoral training should be high on the list of priorities in our universities.

The problem, however, is that many doctoral programmes in many African universities continue to be based on western models of doctoral training. Dominant amongst these is the apprenticeship model, through which students are trained under the supervision of particular supervisors. Despite its strengths, the apprenticeship model is ill suited to a democratised and expanded system of higher education, where more and more students now qualify to undertake a doctoral programme. Expanded access and participation would require dramatic increase and training of supervisors which universities cannot cope with in current circumstances. In addition, it fails to recognise the intricate interconnectedness of knowledge systems across disciplines, and that social and human problems cannot be adequately addressed by the expertise that grows out of single disciplines. Further, the apprenticeship model tends to reproduce expertise akin to itself. Given that many of the experts in our universities received western doctoral training, there is a sense in which current
training approaches will serve to entrench the hegemonies of the western tradition, thus shutting out any meaningful possibilities for transformation.

The following are strategies that could be useful in transforming research training in our universities:

- Creating space to integrate Afro-political theory and critique into the frameworks for conceptualising empirical research, especially in the social sciences and humanities
- Rethinking the apprenticeship model in order to embed collaborative learning and supervision, both within and outside disciplinary and institutional boundaries
- Encouraging rethinking of government policy. Because of its value to society in terms of knowledge production, doctoral training in African universities should be fully supported and encouraged by governments, employers and the business environment, in a non-discriminatory way which benefits both home and international students. Overseas students who complete their doctoral training at African universities should be required to work for a number of years in their study nation following completion of their degrees.

Such transformation will inevitably confront formidable challenges, five of which are briefly discussed below:

- Inertia against transforming funding priorities. The truth is that since many universities in Africa are poorly funded, they survive on externally acquired funding and donor funds, which applies to nearly 80% of the support they receive for research. Priorities of funding organisations do not necessarily match the imperatives of transformation in the African university.
- Mismatch between global and local determinants of good research. Positivism has been the dominant research paradigm in academia, and the type of research it promotes is generally highly valued. On the other hand, interpretivism, collaboration, and the application of critical, colonial and post-colonial theory have the potential to provide a stronger basis for deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the African university and the societies it serves.
- Unevenness in the competitive field of higher education. Research output is the most significant determinant of the position of a university on global ranking systems. Most top universities in the world tend to have increasingly large numbers of postgraduate, rather than undergraduate students. However, for many universities in the developing world, particularly in Africa, the focus is largely on teaching large cohorts of undergraduate classes; this does not necessarily match the research potential and opportunities available at universities in the developed world.
- Some scepticism about the meaning and value of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and Afro-centrism. While there has been a groundswell of academic scholarship making a case for IKS and Afro-centrism in African universities, there remains a sizeable proportion of those who view these ideas rather dimly.
For example, Horsthemke (2004) argues that IKS involves at best an incomplete, partial, or at worst, a questionable understanding or conceptualisation of knowledge and further suggests that as a concept, it has questionable relevance to the debates around real issues of transformation. I disagree completely with these sentiments, as, in my view, they represent overtures by ‘white doubters’—those who are scared of ceding control of the academy and seek to cement the hegemony of the west as the only legitimate players in shaping transformational discourses in the African university.

- Inertia towards transformation. My research at the University of the Witwatersrand in which I sought to determine the ‘appetite’ of different groups of people for transformation, clearly shows that almost 100% of students considered it to be urgent and necessary. However, only 78% staff felt that it was both urgent and necessary. A sizeable proportion of staff seemed to prefer a gradualist approach to transformation, despite acknowledging its necessity. Among senior professors and university management teams, only 65% felt that it was both urgent and necessary. There are concerns around the introduction of transformation for a wide variety of reasons, including the lack of resources; time needed to decolonise people’s minds; and time needed to wean the academy from the influence of global imperatives, especially funding agencies.

CHARTING A WAY FORWARD

In the light of the objectives of this chapter and the theoretical arguments raised here, I end by highlighting five fundamental points to consider regarding the decolonisation of knowledge production systems in African universities.

1. Encouraging commitment to the goal of decolonising our institutions
2. Creating continental momentum for knowledge decolonisation
3. Rethinking models for doctoral training
4. Committing to developing new content and pedagogies that will underpin the knowledge decolonisation process
5. Investing time and resources in resolving the language issue in our universities

A Call for Total Commitment to the Decolonising Agenda

While it is often argued that universities are a microcosm of the societies in which they exist (Douglas, n.d), my view is that because of their privileged position as knowledge generators, universities in Africa need to assume leadership in the transformation endeavour. Much as this will be uncomfortable for a great number of staff in the sector, we owe it to both current and future generations of students, and to our countries and the continent, to spearhead this final process of decolonisation.

The biggest obstacle will be the global capital project. Decolonised universities will essentially be inward looking, while adopting a gaze on global developments.
They will not sit on the frontiers of globalisation like the academies in London, New York and Chicago. Their place will be at the nexus of the local and the global, interacting and mitigating poverty, and championing the cause for equality and equity. As such, they will recruit differently, teach differently, research differently and they will strive to be known for their Africaness, rather than any western orientation. They will strive to be great African universities rather than just great universities in Africa. Nothing short of total commitment to these lofty goals will adequately support the transformation initiatives required from the government, the public and private sectors, and internally within individual institutions.

A Continental Approach rather than Individual Institutional Efforts

Africanisation of knowledge production systems will be unsuccessful if the commitment comes only from individual institutions. The African Union, regional organisations such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), and funding organisations on the continent, amongst other bodies, need to embrace this goal and use it a precondition for supporting future research and knowledge development processes in the sector.

Rethinking Models of Doctoral Training

New doctoral training models will need to be developed and encouraged for the new African university, emphasising the use of communities of scholarship rather than traditional apprenticeship models. The new programmes will need to place collaboration rather than individual endeavour at the centre; and locate Afro political theory as an authentic lens through which to view social science and humanities problems in particular.

Committing to Developing New Content and Pedagogies

Extensive curriculum revision will be required in many university courses. Appropriate local content should be taught alongside the global content inherited from the past. New large class pedagogies which commit to liberating the mind and cultivating social justice will need to be developed, placing a clear focus on empowering previously disadvantaged learners.

Investing in Addressing the Language Conundrum

We need an African policy on the use and teaching of local indigenous languages in schools and universities. No country in the world has become fully developed without using its own language as both a medium of instruction and as a major part
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of the curriculum. The problems and challenges associated with this transformation need to be confronted vigorously.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the continent has become, in the words of Marini (1965), a sub-imperialist space whose purpose is the furtherance of the imperialist project. Despite political independence, the next phase of liberation on the continent needs to be through the knowledge decolonisation process, which will have to be spearheaded by our universities. African universities need to turn themselves around and seize the moment occasioned by the pervasive contemporary discourse of transformation. We have to ask new questions about the relevance of dominant western forms of knowing which continue to be championed in the African university. In truth, African universities should not seek to close their eyes to these forms of knowing; but they should be concerned if western models exclude local and indigenous forms of knowledge.

This chapter has attempted not only to provide a compelling critique of the status of knowledge production in contemporary universities in Africa; it has also made some fairly concrete suggestions about ways to promote the decolonisation of research, teaching and research training in the academy. That process will contribute to the transformation of good universities in Africa into good African universities.

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F. MARINGE


Felix Maringe
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg
South Africa